

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

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R 220157 Z JUN 73

FM AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

TO : AMEMBASSY SAIGON 234

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 021

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMCONSUL DA NANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L BIEN HOA 0219

LIMDIS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PINT MILI VS

SUBJECT: MINH THINKS PROSPECTS FOR PEACE BRIGHT

1. MR 3 CG LTG NGUYEN VAN MINH HAS HAD A CHANGE OF HEART ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR PEACE IN THIS MILITARY REGION. IN A MARKED REVERSAL OF HIS STAND OF LESS THAN A WEEK AGO, MINH TOLD ME YESTERDAY MORNING (JUNE 21) DURING A MEETING I HAD WITH HIM THAT THE CHANCES FOR A CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES ARE BRIGHTER NOW THAN THEY WERE FOLLOWING THE SIGNING OF THE JANUARY 28 ACCORD. ALTHOUGH HE SAID THAT HE STILL DOES NOT TRUST THE COMMUNISTS, WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE IN THE LAST THREE DAYS INDICATES TO HIM THAT THEY, TOO, MAY HAVE HAD A CHANGE OF HEART. HE REASONED THIS BY REFERRING TO THE APPRECIABLE REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER OF INCIDENTS AND THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE CASUALTIES HIS TROOPS ARE SUFFERING RESULT NOT FROM DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH THE COMMUNISTS BUT FROM MINES AND BOOBY TRAPS THEY ENCOUNTER WHILE OUT ON PATROL.

2. I ASKED HIM IF HE THOUGHT THE COMMUNISTS HAD MADE UP THEIR MINDS TO HONOR THE COMMUNIQUE, AND PERHAPS THIS WAS THE REASON WHY THE
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NUMBER OF INCIDENTS HAD DECREASED. MINH TOOK THE OCCASION OF THIS QUESTION TO TELL ME THAT HE STILL HAS SOME MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE COMMUNIQUE AND THAT THIS ALONE WOULD NOT BRING PEACE TO HIS COUNTRY.

HE SAID THAT THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF THE COMMUNIQUE TO IMPLEMENT IS THE SECTION DEALING WITH THE DELINEATION OF BOUNDARIES. MINH MADE THE POINT THAT HIS GOVERNMENT WILL NEVER AGREE TO ANY PROPOSITION WHICH ACKNOWLEDGES EVEN A DE FACTO TERRITORIAL CONTROL ARRANGEMENT. ON THE QUESTION ITSELF, MINH SAID THAT HE HAS SEEN CAPTURED DOCUMENTS WHICH INDICATED THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAD INSTRUCTED

THEIR CADRE TO DIRECT THEIR ATTENTION TO POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PURSUITS. I SUGGESTED TO HIM THAT HE MIGHT FIND IT ADVANTAGEOUS TO TEST THE SINCERITY OF THE COMMUNISTS BY TRYING TO OPEN TALKS WITH ENEMY TROOPS AROUND TON LE CHAM, THE HITHERTO BESIEGED RANGER CAMP

IN THE NORTHEASTERN PART OF TAY NINH PROVINCE. MINH DID NOT DISAGREE WITH THE IDEA BUT REMINDED ME OF PRESIDENT THIEU' S ENJOINER WHICH PROHIBITS COMMANDERS FROM TAKING THE INITIATIVE IN THIS REGARD.

3. I THEN ASKED HIM WHAT HIS VIEWS WERE ON THE COMMUNIQUE AS A BASIS FOR RECONCILING DIFFERENCES WITH THE COMMUNISTS. MINH SAID SLHAT MUCH WILL DEPEND ON THE ATTITUDE OF HIS OWN GOVERNMENT, LET ALONE THAT OF THE PRG. HE EXPLAINED THIS BY SAYING THAT SOME PEOPLE IN HIS GOVERNMENT ARE NOT YET CONVINCED THAT A LASTING PEACE CAN BE WORKED OUT WITH THE COMMUNISTS. THEY BELIEVE, AND MINH SAID THAT HE IS SOMEWHAT SYMPATHETIC TO THEIR POSITION, THAT THE COMMUNISTS ARE STILL BENT ON CAPTURING CONTROL OF THIS COUNTRY BY FORCE, AND THAT ANY PEACE TO WHICH THEY WOULD AGREE WOULD BE FOR THE PURPOSE OF BUYING TIME, NOT FOR A LASTING PEACE.

WALKINSHAW

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